THE HARRIS SURVEY

Public Feels Probe of JFK by Garrison Futile

By LOUIS HARRIS (POLLSTER PIMP)

For the first time in more than a year, the willingness of the American people to believe the assassination of President Kennedy was part of a broader plot rather than the work of one man has declined. A major reason for this shift of opinion is a sharp drop in the number of people who feel the investigation by New Orleans Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison will shed any new light on the assassination.

Last May and again in this latest survey a carefully drawn cross section of 1000 families was asked if they had followed the Garrison investigation. In both instances approximately 6 to 10 people had done so. Then each person familiar with Garrison's investigation was asked:

"Do you think the Jim Garrison investigation in New Orleans will shed new light on the John Kennedy assassination, or do you think not much will come of it?"

	SEPTEMBER	MAY
Will shed light on J.F.K. death	32%	45%
Not much will come of it	60	46
Not sure	8	9

Partly because of some of the bizarre episodes associated with Garrison's efforts and partly because the alleged links of Lee Harvey Oswald to others in a conspiratorial band have not seemed convincing, the public now has reached a point of considerable disenchantment with the New Orleans investigation.

Along with the decline of public confidence in Garrison's probe, a rise in support for the Warren Commission report has taken place.

Over the past year, on four separate ocassions, comparable cross sections of the public have been asked:

"From what you have read, do you feel that the full story of John Kennedy's assassination was reported in the Warren Commission report, or do you think there are still a lot of unanswered questions about who killed President Kennedy and how it was done?"

	SEPT. 1967	MAY 1967	FEB. 1967	SEPT. 1966
Still unanswered questions	64%	72%	59%	54%
Told full story	24	18	30	14
Not sure	12	10	11	32

A sizeable majority of the American people still believes there were major gaps in the Warren Commission report. Only a minority is convinced the commission told the "full story" of the assassination.

However, the significant finding is that after eight months of steady increases in public doubts about the commission report the tide of suspicion appears to be ebbing. The same trend is evident in another question dealing directly with whether the Kennedy killing was the working of one man or part of a broader plot.

"Do you feel that the John Kennedy assassination was the work of one man or part of a broader plot?"

	SEPT. 1961	MAY 1967	FEB. 1967	SEPT. 1966
Work of one man	24%	19%	35%	34%
A broader plot	60	66	44	46
Not sure	16	15	21	20

Again, a majority of the public still is convinced John F. Kennedy's death was plotted by a band of conspirators rather than by Oswald alone. Nonetheless, the high-water mark of such doubts now appears to have been reached and seems to be receding today.

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